

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 16, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-107 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515


Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer:

During his September 9 address to the Congress on health care reform, President Obama told the American people that "no federal dollars will be used to fund abortions." As reform legislation moves closer to floor consideration, we urge you to continue to work with authors of the House bill to ensure that this goal and the deeply-held beliefs of millions of Americans opposed to abortion are fully and unequivocally represented in legislative language. We are committed to protecting life at all stages and upholding existing policies that prevent federal taxpayer dollars from being used to fund abortion. We are also committed to reforming our health care system. With the adoption of several amendments in July, the Energy and Commerce Committee attempted to improve the bill by taking steps to prevent tax dollars from paying for abortions and ensuring every person has access to pro-life insurance policies. However, we also believe more can and must be done.

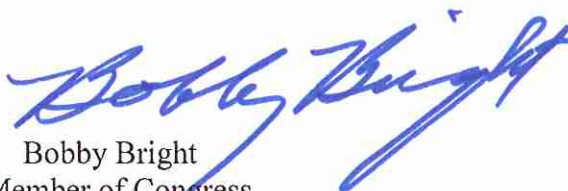
First, our constituents demand access to health insurance plans in which their premiums are not used to pay for abortions, and these protections will ensure pro-life plans are always available to individuals and businesses at all times. To that end, we were pleased the Capps Amendment permanently prohibits the Health Benefits Advisory Committee from requiring private health insurance plans to cover abortions. Second, we support the provision in the Capps Amendment that explicitly protects the rights of states like Indiana and Alabama to continue to enforce important pro-life laws like parental notification, informed consent, and Medicaid abortion funding prohibitions. Third, we support additional changes made in July to protect the rights of all health care providers to refuse to perform medical procedures or treatments that offend their faith or their conscience.

While these provisions are important, we believe there is still a need to include additional protections to ensure not a single American has his or her federal tax dollars directed toward abortions. First, we believe stronger language must be added to the bill to protect federal tax dollars from funding abortions through any new public health insurance option. Second, we support adding a new provision to clearly define the standard used to ensure federal subsidies are not used to purchase coverage for abortions.

Once again, we look forward to working with you as the House of Representatives considers legislation to address the health care crisis impacting so many American families. We remain dedicated to enacting real health care reform this year while also respecting the strongly held convictions of millions of Americans who oppose abortion.


Brad Ellsworth
Member of Congress

Sincerely,


Bobby Bright
Member of Congress